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REMARKS

The Applicant gratefully acknowledges the Examiner's allowance of claims 24, 27 – 33, and 35. The Examiner has objected to claims 3, 9, 24, and 34 but has stated that those claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claims 3, 9, and 24 are each dependent on claim 1, therefore the limitations of claim 1 have been added to those claims to make them independent and allowable. Claim 34 is dependent on claim 9, which in turn is dependent on claim 1. Thus, in order to make claim 34 independent and allowable, the Applicant has amended it to include the corpus of claims 1 and 9.

The Applicant has cancelled rejected claim 1, and has amended claims 4 – 8, 22, and 23 to depend from amended claim 3. Entry of the amendments and allowance of the objected to claims is respectfully requested.

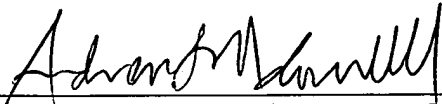
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CONCLUSION

A Notice of Allowance with respect to claims 3-9, 22- 25, and 27 – 35 is respectfully requested. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if any questions remain after consideration of this response, or if such would otherwise facilitate prosecution.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: 12/24/2003

By   
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